



South Carolina River News

Spring 1994

State River Issues and Events

Volume 1, Number 1

Watching the waters

*"Over their heads the towering and tenebrous boughs of the cypress
Met in a dusky arch, and trailing mosses
in mid-air
Waved like banners that hung on the
walls of ancient cathedrals"*

These are the words Francis Harper used to describe the character of the Okefenokee Swamp.

These same images can describe the Little Pee Dee, the Salkehatchie and other blackwater rivers in South Carolina. Equally evocative are the images of cold and swift mountain streams flowing through tunnels created by the up-stretched limbs of rhododendrons.

South Carolina's 11,000 miles of rivers enliven the landscape with a vitality that can only be found in moving water. Yet this resource is the focus of increasing pressure from human impacts.

The S. C. Water Resources Commission, through the Scenic Rivers Program, River Corridor Planning Program and River Conservation Education Program, works with people across the state on a variety of river issues.

Community interest in river conservation and comprehensive river management has never been greater, as shown by the number of new and established grassroots groups that are addressing local river concerns. To effectively manage our state's rivers, we need to share our experiences and perspectives. We hope this newsletter serves as the communication vehicle to accomplish this.

To that end, we ask that you share your river news with us. Together we can make this newsletter the source for information on river issues and events.

Barry Beasley, Program Director

River Management

Edisto River Basin residents help shape area's future

The Edisto River, one of the longest undisturbed blackwater rivers in the United States, drains an area that possesses a wealth of natural resources. Participants in the Edisto River Basin Project are attempting to improve the way environmental management decisions are made in this pristine region of the state.

The South Carolina Water Resources Commission, along with the South Carolina Department of Commerce and the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, are working with local government, businesses and the public to: evaluate the natural, cultural, and economic resources of the Edisto River Basin; understand the relationship between the economic needs of the basin and the value of the natural and cultural environment; and, based on scientific

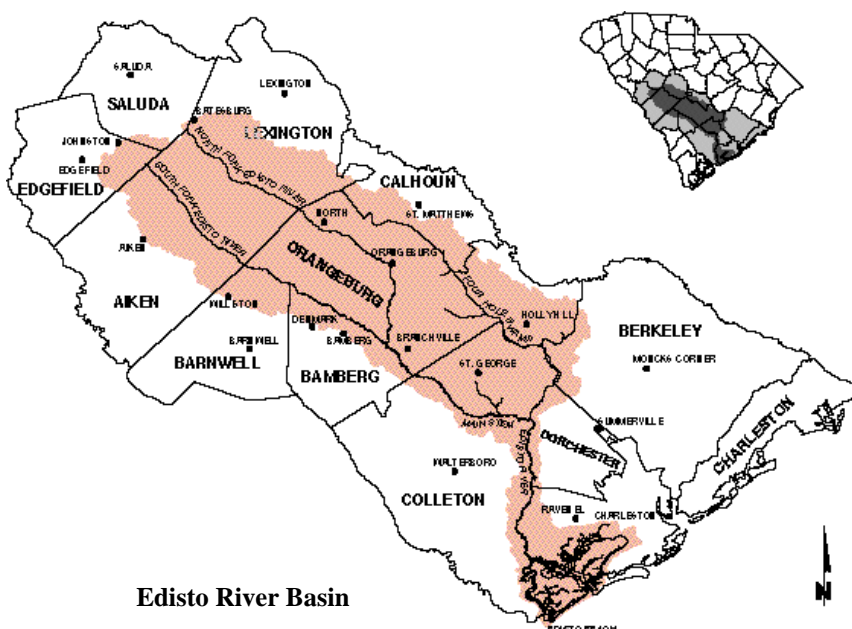
evaluation and local values, make recommendations on how these resources should be used and protected.

All plans and recommendations from the Edisto Basin Project will come from the basin's residents. By design, the project aims to provide the people of the Edisto Basin with an opportunity to play an active role in shaping the region's future.

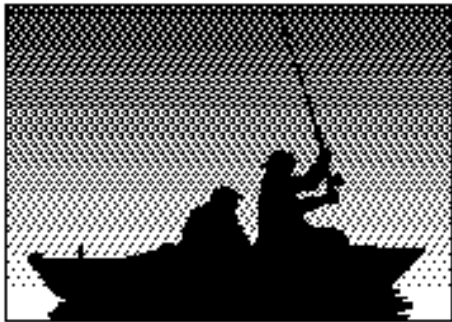
People from throughout the basin are being represented in two separate groups: (1) a set of "Expert Committees," representing local resource users like foresters, farmers, developers, anglers, hunters, etc., responsible for evaluating the basin's economic and natural resources; and (2) a "Basin Task Force," representing the region's people

See Edisto continued on page 3

Project Area



Edisto River Basin



Scenic Rivers Program protects S.C. waters

Over the years the South Carolina Scenic Rivers Program has involved citizens from across the state in planning for the future of their rivers.

The goal of this program is to help protect unique or outstanding scenic, recreational, geologic, botanical, fish, wildlife, historic or cultural values of the state's rivers.

By appointing an advisory council composed of landowners along a scenic river corridor, the South Carolina Water Resources Commission, through the Scenic Rivers Program, provides an opportunity for riverine landowners to develop a management plan. This plan identifies the river's assets and potential threats and recommends land management practices that are compatible with the preservation of scenic rivers.

Scenic river status does not automatically protect scenic river values, but provides the means for landowners to formally address short- and long-term management practices on lands bordering the river. The success of the Scenic Rivers Program depends on the cooperation and communication between advisory council members and voluntary participation by landowners.

Scenic river designation also offers interested landowners an opportunity to preserve the river's present-day character indefinitely by allowing voluntary conservation easement agreements with the state on lands bordering the river. Property title remains in the landowner's name under any easement agreement, and the landowner may qualify for local, state, and federal tax benefits.

To learn more about the Scenic Rivers Program contact Barry Beasley at 737-0800 or Cindy Brown at 737-0067.

Scenic River News

Broad River Management Plan guides river's future

For the past two years, residents of the upstate have been deliberating over the future of the scenic stretch of the Broad River. The Broad River Management Plan, which is now available for distribution, describes their shared vision.

Major issues addressed by the Broad River Management Plan are access, preservation of natural and cultural features, protection of special features, maintenance and enhancement of water quality, and law enforcement considerations. The focus of the plan is to maintain the present-day cultural and scenic character of the river, emphasizing owner rights. It is not a parks or tourism proposal.

The management plan was written by the Broad River Advisory Council, which is composed of ten landowners in the river corridor. It is the principal instrument used to assist and advise the South Carolina Water Resources Commission on protection and management of the scenic river.

The 15.3-mile segment of the Broad River, bordering York and Cherokee counties from the Ninety-nine Islands

Dam to the confluence with the Pacolet River, was designated a state scenic river by the South Carolina General Assembly on May 31, 1991.

Scenic river designation for this segment of the Broad River was sought by the Broad River Landowner Coalition in May 1989, in response to a proposal to dam the river, which would have impounded approximately 25,000 acres.

Background on the South Carolina Scenic Rivers Program and the recently adopted Broad River Scenic River Management Plan will be presented to Broad River landowners at local meetings in mid-1994. The meetings will introduce landowners to the work of the Broad River Scenic River Advisory Council and provide an opportunity for questions to be answered.

To receive a copy of the management plan or to be placed on the mailing list for Broad River Advisory Council meetings, please call the S. C. Water Resources Commission at 737-0067.

River Corridor Planning

Catawba River Plan available soon

Catawba River residents will soon have information to guide development and conservation activities on the river.

That guidance will come from the Catawba River Corridor Plan that is now being written and should be available to the public by the summer of 1994.

The Catawba River study resulted in a comprehensive plan for the 30-mile segment of the Catawba beginning at the Lake Wylie Dam and ending at the headwaters of the Fishing Creek Reservoir. The goal of the planning process, which addressed issues ranging from water quality, to economic development, to resource protection, was to create a balanced management framework for the river that will guide development and protection efforts for this critical resource.

In 1992, York, Chester, and Lancaster County Councils funded the study and

appointed a 43-member citizen task force to develop the plan. The task force included landowners, local elected officials, conservationists, industry and state agency representatives. The S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism; S.C. Water Resources Commission; and the Catawba Regional Planning Council were partners in this study.

Although this type of process is complex, it is effective because it's community-based and provides a chance for anyone with river-related interests to engage in decision making. The task force achieved this by involving over 130 people in 13 resource committees.

For further information, contact Barry Beasley, Task Force Chair, at 737-0800.

Community Interest

South Carolina's beaches/waterways get "clean sweep"

Mark your calendars now for South Carolina's fifth annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep. It will be held statewide on Saturday, September 17.

The sweep serves three primary functions: to clean South Carolina's waterways of debris; to serve as a year-round awareness program to educate people of the heavy toll aquatic debris takes on our economy and environment; and to compile yearly data on the state's debris collection to serve as a comparison with other states.

Beach Sweep is an annual national event and is sponsored by the Center for Marine Conservation in Washington, D.C. Its aim is to clean debris from coastal waterways across the country. North and South Carolina are the only states to organize river cleanups in conjunction with beach cleanups.

Of the 33 participating states only four states draw more people during this event than South Carolina. And only five states collect more debris and clean more miles than South Carolina.

Last September, over 7,000 volunteers teamed up across the state at 60

sites for the one-day sweep and removed 77.5 tons of debris from South Carolina's waterways.

This year's campaign builds on last year's popular Plus-One theme, which encourages recreational boaters to bring back an extra piece of debris from each outing along with what they generated.

Each year, business and industry leaders generously contribute to the Beach Sweep/River Sweep educational campaign, which produces such items as Plus-One boating decals, brochures, litter bags, newspaper and media announcements, t-shirts, and thank-you items for volunteer coordinators.

As part of this year's celebration, a companion campaign to the '94 Sweep will be added — the BOC Challenge, an around-the-world yacht race. This year's voyage will leave Charleston the week of our sweep! A bon voyage gala is planned upon the yachts' departure.

We invite you to join us and encourage you to participate in a local sweep in your area. If you are interested in organizing a cleanup, contact the Scenic Rivers staff at 737-0067.

Recent Events

Fifty-four river miles named "scenic"

Fifty-four miles of the Lynches River received scenic river status on March 24 when the Governor signed the Lynches River Scenic River bill. This designation, which recognizes the river between U.S. 15 and the eastern boundary of the Lynches River State Park, makes this stretch the longest scenic river in the state.

The task of assembling the Lynches River Advisory Council, a body composed of riverine landowners and others in the community, now lies ahead. The advisory council will develop a management plan that considers and protects the interests of private property owners while protecting the natural and cultural resources of the Lynches River.

Among the features that qualify the

Lynches as a scenic river are its wooded banks which offer outstanding scenery for boaters. The diverse habitat provided by these natural areas also offers refuge for wildlife impacted by adjacent land use. Recreational opportunities abound, with two state parks offering public camping, picnicking, and swimming.

The area is historically significant too. It has been documented that the last duel in South Carolina took place at the U.S. 15 bridge, at the time called Radcliff's Bridge.

The process of designation was started in March 1992 after the Commission received a request from the Lynches River Council, a local citizens group. An eligibility study determined that the scenic, recreational, geologic, ecological, and cultural values of the Lynches are outstanding.

June celebrates American Rivers Month

June marks the celebration of South Carolina's 13th annual American Rivers Month. During this month, river lovers from across the state will paddle through, fish in, and hike along miles of South Carolina's beautiful rivers.

Through the years, American Rivers Month has generated a lot of interest and participation in such river related events as canoeing, kayaking, river hiking trips, and fishing expeditions. This popular program began in Massachusetts and through a grassroots movement has spread across the entire country.

We encourage you to take time during American Rivers Month, and every month, to enjoy South Carolina's vast network of rivers. And if you know of river related events taking place in June, please write or call us. We'll be happy to publish that information in our South Carolina American Rivers Month brochure.

Edisto continued from page 1

and responsible for developing recommendations about resource management. The Basin Task Force and the Expert Committees number a total of roughly 150 people from the Edisto Basin.

The critical challenge of this project is engaging the people of the Edisto River Basin in developing a vision for resource use and protection. If you are interested or want to become involved, please let us know. For further information, contact Bill Marshall at the SCWRC.



South Carolina River News

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Editor's Corner

South Carolina River News needs you!

Welcome to the first edition of South Carolina River News! We are happy to have the opportunity to provide a publication that will be a common source of river news for folks statewide — folks who have been involved in the business of river conservation and river use for years.

The Rivers Conservation program is growing here at the S.C. Water Resources Commission at a rapid pace. Through this newsletter we'll attempt to keep you informed of our activities. It is also our hope that you will use this publication to communicate all of your river news to fellow river lovers and users across the state.

In each edition we will feature

articles covering river management, river recreation, and scenic river news, as well as publicize river happenings through a calendar of events. We hope to publish the

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newsletter four times a year. To submit an article to South Carolina River News or notify readers of an upcoming river-related event, contact the SCWRC at 737-0067, or fax your newsletter article to us at 765-9080. We will try to get your request in the upcoming newsletter.

Like a river is fed by its tributaries, we hope that you will supply us with the news our readers need to know. Through clear communication and an understanding of the issues, we can all help assure the continued viability of what is truly one of

Schedule of Events

May 7

Columbia Canoe-a-thon: Sponsored by Canoeing for Kids

May 9

Basin Task Force Meeting: Edisto Basin Project; Orangeburg-Calhoun Tech

June 25

2nd Annual Saluda River Whitewater Festival: Sponsored by Palmetto Paddlers

June

American Rivers Month

our state's richest resources — its vast network of rivers. Join us in promoting river awareness and enjoyment in South Carolina. We look forward to working with each of you.

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